



The Open
University

A223/SEP

Specimen Examination Paper

EARLY MODERN EUROPE: SOCIETY AND CULTURE 1500–1780

Time allowed: 3 hours

The examination is arranged in three parts and takes three hours.

Answer **one** question from each of the three parts: each is worth one-third of the total marks. You should spend no more than one hour on your answer to each question.

There should be no significant overlap in the content of any of your answers. You must not duplicate material.

Please write your answers in the answer book(s) provided

At the end of the examination

Check that you have written your personal identifier and examination number on each answer book used. **Failure to do so will mean that your work cannot be identified.**

Put all your used answer books together with your signed desk record on top. Fasten them in the top left corner with the round paper fastener. Attach this question paper to the back of the answer books with the flat paper clip.

If you were sitting this examination, you would have been given advance notice that:

- **Part 1** questions will be based on documents from Book 3, Chapters 17 and 22 (in the print chapters and online sessions).
- **Part 2** questions will be based on Book 1, Chapters 4, 5, and 6.
- **Part 3** questions will be on the themes of religion and society.

PART 1 Answer **one** question from this part.

Question 1 Write a critical analysis of the following extract from Daniel Defoe (1986 [1724–26], *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, London, Penguin. Your analysis should form a continuous piece of prose and should:

- comment on the nature, origin and purpose of the document and its significance as historical evidence
- briefly locate the extract within its historical context, and
- indicate with examples from the extract what we can learn from Defoe's representation of Britain.

This leads me to cross the hills from Milton to Maidstone, about ten miles distant. This is a considerable town, very populous, and the inhabitants generally wealthy ... Round this town are the largest cherry orchards, and the most of them that are in any part of England ... in the country adjacent, are great quantities of hops planted, and this is ... the first place in England where hops were planted in any quantity ... These were the hops, I suppose, which were planted at the beginning of the Reformation ...

From this town, and the neighbouring parts, London is supplied with more particulars than from any single market town in England.

1. From the wild of Kent ... they bring large Kentish bullocks, famed for being generally all red, and with horns crooked inward ...
2. From the same country are brought great quantities of the largest timber for supply of the king's yards at Chatham ...
3. ... a very large quantity of corn brought up to London, besides hops and cherries.
4. Also a kind of paving stone ... 'tis used to pave court-yards and passages to gentlemen's houses being the same the Royal Exchange at London is paved with ...
5. Also fine white sand for the glass-houses, esteemed the best in England for melting into flint-glass, and looking-glass plates ...
6. Also very great quantities of fruit, such as Kentish pippins, runnets, &c which come up as the cherries do, whole hoy-loads at a time to the wharf called the Three Cranes, in London; which is the greatest pippin market perhaps in the world.

(Defoe, 1986, pp. 130–31)

- Question 2** Write a critical analysis of the following extract from Nicholas Culpeper (1655), *An Ephemeris for the year 1651*. Your analysis should form a continuous piece of prose and should:
- comment on the nature, origin and purpose of the document and its significance as historical evidence
 - briefly locate the extract within its historical context, and
 - explain what it tells us about the relationship between astrology and medicine in the early modern period.

I shall not now be sparing to deliver my Judgement a little for the publique good, what Diseases are like to reign ... And herein *Saturn* being Lord of the Sixth [House], the sign *Capricorn* on the Cusp thereof with the *Moon*, whose detriment is there in Conjunction with *Saturn*, both posited in *Virgo*, tells me, that there will be such a disease in the guts as will puzzle the *College* of Physicians of *London* to cure, or to know the cause ... besides spleenitick [bad tempered] passions of all sorts, both hardness and opilations [blockages], stoppings, and fluxes thereof, with most cruel pains and torments, in so much that of the beginning of a *Cronick* Infirmitie, the end may be very *acute* [W]omen, but especially women of a middle age, or something more, will be ... subject to suppression of their *Menses* ... as also young women will be subject to abortions, and hard labour.

(Culpeper, 1655, pp. 8–9)

PART 2 Answer **one** question from this part.

- Question 3** 'Early modern explanations of disease were based on a rational and coherent system of ideas'. Discuss.

- Question 4** Identify the most important factors shaping the working lives of people in early modern Europe.

- Question 5** Discuss how early modern societies dealt with the problem of poverty.

PART 3 Answer **one** question from this part.
Your answer should make use of material from two or more of the module books.

- Question 6** Analyse the impact of the Reformation on the lives of individuals and communities.

- Question 7** 'Early modern people lived in a strict social hierarchy'. Write an essay explaining why you agree or disagree with this statement.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

Notes on the paper

The following section gives notes on each of the three parts of the exam. In each case it starts with some general notes on answering questions in that part of the Specimen Examination Paper and then offers more detailed notes on how to answer one of the questions from that part of the paper.

Part 1

You have done exercises of this kind already in TMA 02 and in many activities in the module. As in TMA 02, you will need to show that you can examine a document critically and use it appropriately to discuss historical questions. The wording of the questions may vary, but you will always be expected to critically analyse the source. This means to discuss the nature, origin and purpose of the source; to examine its content; to assess its significance as historical evidence, including the context within which it was produced and how it relates to a wider historical question or events of the time. How to approach document questions that require critical analysis is discussed in various places in the books of the module, and also in the Assessment Guide.

When tackling a Part 1 question you should write in continuous prose (not in note form) in the form of an essay. You will lose marks if you confine yourself merely to paraphrasing a document or, conversely, if you write only about its general context without reference to the source or to the specific requirements of the question. While you do not need to follow the sequence of the questions given in the paper, it is important that you answer all the parts of the question given and include a brief introduction and conclusion. In your introduction you might give details of the nature and origin of the extract, and in your conclusion you might state your opinion of the usefulness of the document. You should also refer to the third part of the question in both the introduction and conclusion, which asks you to describe how the document can be used to examine broader historical questions.

Question 2

There are many ways in which you might organise your answer, so what follows is a suggested structure. There are also other points you may want to include, and you will have to be selective: remember to use short quotations from the extract as evidence for what you write.

- You may want to begin by noting the genre to which this book belongs. It is an 'Ephemeris', a work predicting events on the basis of the position of celestial bodies in a specific year and usually for a specific location. Prognostications like this were published by a range of authors and had a wide circulation: many readers were interested in knowing in advance what the year ahead would bring. As a medical practitioner, Culpeper was concerned with the prevalent diseases that he would have to treat and he also saw the compilation of yearly predictions ('judgement') as a valued feature of his profession, and one that he carried out for 'public good'. To historians, these works provide evidence of the popularity of astrology and its various uses.
- You may want to consider two main historical contexts. First the intellectual one: Culpeper published his book in 1655, that is, a century after Copernicus had proposed an entirely new explanation of the astronomical movements and at a time of very important transformations in natural knowledge. Being aware of this context allows us to appreciate even more the endurance of astrology as a system of beliefs. The second context is political: you may point out that in 1655 the upheaval of the English civil wars was still fresh in people's minds and that

astrological prognostications had played an important role in the conflict. So, although the extract contains no references to the political situation, it may be useful to recall briefly that astrology still had cultural and political clout.

- However, you are asked to focus on the more precise question of what the source tells us about the relationships between medicine and astrology and so you have to show that you understand some of the technical aspects of the prediction. You may notice, for example, that the position of various planets is considered the cause of diseases that will hit the population and puzzle even the most elite physicians of London. So while the assumption is that celestial bodies can bring about diseases, to explain how this happens is regarded as a challenging task. You will notice that the main conditions listed here relate to a humoral understanding of the body, in particular they are explained as the bad effects of blockages – you will know that these are in the flow of humors. Specific parts of the body are mentioned as more affected (the guts) and a worsening of pains is also predicted. You may also notice that the extract refers to specific diseases of women and the ill effects of the stars on their pregnancies, but also on women of different ages. So the source shows that an astrological understanding of the causes of disease was fully integrated into the larger humoral framework with which physicians and patients alike understood health and disease. Another side of the relationships between medicine and astrology that the extract shows is that prognostications were supposed to help medical practitioners prepare for the professional challenges ahead (you can imagine how this advice could be put to use by other physicians) and that being able to make such predictions, as Culpeper was, could add prestige to a doctor.

Part 2

The questions in this part of the examination paper ask you to engage with issues discussed in selected chapters in the module books. While your answer should focus on the chapters listed in the Advance Notification, you can refer to relevant information from other chapters if you wish. The questions do not ask you to describe or narrate episodes or events, and it is not enough simply to relate what you know about the subject. On the contrary, they ask you to make assessments, provide analyses or offer judgements and, as such, require you to weigh up the evidence and advance arguments supported by evidence or examples from primary and secondary sources.

Remember to write in continuous prose and to structure the answer as an essay, with an introduction and a conclusion. There is advice on writing essay answers in the Assessment Guide, which is relevant to writing in exams.

Question 5

Here you would be well advised to begin by pointing out that early modern societies dealt with poverty in two interconnected and complementary ways: through relief and through punishment. This resulted in new laws, new welfare schemes and new institutions such as almshouses or hospitals and workhouses. It would also be important to note that attitudes towards the poor and strategies for how to deal with them depended on period, location, and position in society. Likewise, you should note that only a minority of the poor received unconditional support. In that context it is essential to make clear that early modern societies made a distinction between the deserving, as opposed to the undeserving, poor.

Among the latter were able bodied men out of work and vagrants, as opposed to the deserving poor among whom were orphans, the old and infirm, the sick and disabled. Among the important points you might want to include are:

- A gradual shift over time which sought to address poverty through more bureaucratic measures.
- Anxiety among the governing elites about the perceived growing threat of the poor caused by population growth, inflation, and land scarcity. The Reformation may also have resulted in increased concern about the morality and idleness of the poor which caused governments to take a more forceful approach to poverty; this resulted in new laws, especially against vagrants. The result was more intervention with wandering beggars being flogged and expelled from many cities. New institutions such as workhouses or houses of correction were established to incarcerate vagrants and able bodied poor, such as Bridewell in London.
- Relief of the poor took many forms. You may want to refer to the 'economy of makeshifts'. You should note that official charity was local not national. Nor was it comprehensive in its reach – only a small proportion of the poor were able to rely fully on the public purse for their maintenance – for the vast majority relief was limited and occasional. You may want to discuss the significance of the English Poor Law.
- Official relief was concentrated in towns and cities where civic officials collected funds through private donations, public subscriptions, and occasionally taxation. Orphanages for fatherless children, and almshouses or hospitals were established for the old and infirm, while one-off payments were made available for the ill and temporary disabled, occasionally extended to the able-bodied poor if they could present a particularly convincing case. Many of the able-bodied poor, however, ended up in one of the new workhouses.
- In times of economic depression and major harvest failures some towns and cities were able to provide free or subsidised food for the starving poor from municipal granaries.
- In the countryside, where the majority of the population resided, the parish church and the local minister remained in charge of poor relief supported by churchwardens and prominent residents. Funds for the poor were collected at weekly services, via gifts from wealthy individuals, and income from tithes and church property.
- A novelty in the period was the authorities' interest in measuring and surveying poverty, from cities to national governments, as part of the general effort to transform the poor from a social threat and drain on public resources to contributors to the national economy.

Part 3

As in Part 2, answers to Part 3 questions should be written as continuous prose in essay form with an introduction and a conclusion. Again, the questions are not asking for descriptive, narrative answers, but require analysis. It is important that you build up an argument, backing it up with supporting evidence referring, where possible, to primary sources and the work of historians. In other respects, however, the questions are rather different. Questions in Part 2 draw on individual chapters from one module book; questions in Part 3 test your knowledge of themes as they have been developed in the module and ask you to consider several chapters from more than one of the module books. These differences should be reflected in your answers.

At first sight you may find the questions in this section more difficult than those in Part 2. The questions will require you to think about the material

in a different way and to make connections between different parts of the module material. But remember that you have tackled a similar type of question in TMA 05.

With questions of this sort, it is particularly important that you make a plan before you start. Since you are being asked to think about the material in a more synthetic way, it is essential that you try to set out your case and your examples before you launch into writing. The examples you use may be less detailed than those in Part 2, but it is still important that you attempt to provide evidence from primary and secondary sources, otherwise your answer is likely to be vague. Read the question carefully and note what it asks you to do in your answer. For example, a question may ask you to compare and contrast how a theme features in an earlier and later period. There are different ways this can be done. In some cases it may make most sense to look at one period and then the other. Here you should write on the first period and then, during your discussion of the second period, incorporate comparisons with the first.

For an explanation of the different formats of these type of questions, please refer to the Assessment Guide.

Question 7

You must remember to give a clear response to the question, stating whether you agree with the statement or not, as well as explaining why. It would be wise to make clear in the introduction to your essay whether you will argue in favour of the question or against it. The main body of your essay should then provide evidence to back up your argument.

In this case, you will probably take the view that the statement in question is broadly true. In order to back that up, you might discuss:

- the widespread notion of the 'society of orders' and the formal (and often legal) distinctions between the privileged clergy and nobility and the commoners
- the dominant social, economic and political role of the nobility, which largely continued throughout the period
- the fact that, although the nature of the hierarchy may have changed over the period (with the rise of wealthy merchants and the 'middling sort'), the notion that society was inevitably and rightly hierarchical remained largely unchallenged.

You could also discuss gender hierarchies here, making the point that women were typically regarded as subordinate to men and patriarchy was a dominant concept, and that the young were subordinate to the old.

Remember to give specific examples from the module materials.

However, the best essays will show that you are aware of both sides of the argument, even if one side is clearly stronger than the other. Here you could point out that individuals could on occasion resist or break out of the strict social hierarchy. Some examples of this would include:

- the scope for social mobility between the nobility and the commoners noted in Chapter 7, particularly in the case of urban or trading elites (although again, the

fact that it was possible for individuals to change their position in the hierarchy did not mean that the hierarchy ceased to exist)

- the scope for women to resist gender restrictions in various ways noted in Chapter 14.

You might also cite the possibility of rebellion or riot, in which the political implications of the social hierarchy were challenged.

In your conclusion, you should briefly restate your response to the question.